

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

Methods and systems are described for controlling access to presence information using a plurality of different access permission types. Presence information is maintained over a computer network and describes availability of computers and associated users over that network. For example, instant messaging applications often involve maintaining presence information. Users control access to presence information using a number of different access permission types such as the right to view accurate presence information, the right to view any presence information, or the right to act on accessed presence information. By using several different access permission types, the present invention enables finer control over access to presence information.

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